Recommendations and Guidelines for Administering In-Person Exams

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Developed by the Academic Integrity Committee
in collaboration with the Advisory Group on Disability, Access, and Inclusion (AGDAI)

Middlebury has policies around assessments that are unique to our institution and that are stated in the Middlebury College Handbook. The goal of these guidelines is to help ensure that every student has the opportunity to demonstrate their learning to the best of their ability and that faculty have structured guidance that helps them achieve their goals while abiding by Middlebury's policies. Any assessment is likely to be a stressful situation for students. Our hope is that by developing a set of shared guidelines, we can establish a routine for the administration of in-person exams that students will experience as consistent and equitable across the college, thereby, removing a possible, additional source of anxiety regarding *how* an exam might be administered. These guidelines are not developed with a punitive intent to "catch" students nor are these guidelines intended to predict and address every possible situation that may arise during the administration of an exam. Rather, the goal is to provide guidance for faculty and provide consistent experiences for students.

A faculty member who wants to proctor an exam must obtain authorization in advance from the Dean of the Faculty. Article II, Sections (b) and (c) of the Constitution of the Undergraduate Honor System, state, "b. No proctors will be present during examinations, unless specific authorization has been given by the Dean of the Faculty. c. The Dean of the Faculty may grant an instructor permission to proctor an examination in his or her course when the instructor has communicated to the Dean of the Faculty that she or he has a concern that students will cheat in examinations in the course. Authorization will apply to the remainder of the semester."

Announcement and Scheduling of an In-Person Exam:

- Per existing faculty practice, the date of all formal exams for any course should be listed in the course syllabus and available to students on the first day of class. The early, public sharing of scheduled exams helps all students to plan effectively and provides time for students who have specific accommodations to work with faculty and the Disability Resource Center to ensure that all students have a chance for success.
- Notification of a change to in-person proctoring: Faculty are required to make a formal announcement and to send an email notifying students of a change to in-person proctoring at least 24 hours prior to the examination.
- Faculty are encouraged to communicate to students both verbally and in writing (for example, in the syllabus, via email or posted on a course Canvas site), whether exams are proctored in the course and provide a basic statement regarding examination procedures such as materials needed, bathroom rules, etc. a week before a scheduled exam. The purpose of this recommendation is to provide those students who have accommodations time to plan in advance rather than have to respond, at the last minute, to an unexpected condition of the exam.

Room Setup in Preparation for an In-Person Exam:

- Whether an exam is taking place in the academic space that is normally used for the course or the exam has been scheduled in a different location, be sure to check that the room actually has the requisite number of seats and that all lighting is functioning. If any items need repair, complete a Facilities Request form to ask for any necessary repairs.
- Are there any unique space or equipment demands for your exam? Are these unique materials in place?
- If required, is there a clear and obvious place for the proctor to sit and comfortably observe all students?

Procedure on the Day of the In-Person Exam

The specific needs for any exam will depend on the content and context of the course. However, there are several reminders listed below:

- Are there sufficient exam materials for the number of students taking the exam?
- Are students expected to have any items of their own that they may use in the exam such as scratch paper, calculators, pencils, drawing pencils, etc.? What happens if a student does not have one of these items? Are there extras?
- Questions to consider:
    - What are the student accommodations that need to be considered?
    - What are your expectations regarding cell phones? Should they be silenced and deposited in one place?
    - Where should backpacks be placed? Should they all be placed at the front of the room with cell phones inside? Are they accessible for students who finish the exam early?
    - Are your expectations for the exam posted and visible? For example: Is there assigned seating or will students be able to sit anywhere they choose? Are students expected to be silent and not communicate during the exam?
    - Are there any particular materials that are regularly used in the course but prohibited in this exam setting? Has the prohibition been stated and made explicit in writing?
    - What other restrictions are specific to your content and context?
    - Depending on the length of the exam, will you allow bathroom breaks or not? Are there limits to what students may take with them on a bathroom break like cell phones? In some cases, students may have specific accommodations that allow for breaks for medical reasons. Has your policy regarding bathroom breaks been stated and made explicit in writing? Have you given time for students to use the bathroom prior to the start of an exam?

Procedures for Unproctored Exams

Article II of the Constitution of the Undergraduate Honor System stipulates certain procedures to be followed for unproctored exams:

- "Only authorized materials may be used during an examination."
- "The instructor will remain in the examination room for no more than 15 minutes after the start of an examination. He or she may return during the examination to check on any further problems that students may have with examination questions or general procedure, only if he or she announces his or her intention to do so at the beginning of the examination. Instructors will remain in the general area for questions for the duration of the examination period."
- "During the examination each student will have complete freedom of action providing he or she does not interfere with the work of others. Except in the case of take-home examinations, no examination papers will be taken from the room except to consult with the instructor."

The Human Proctoring of Exams

If you have received approval from the Dean of the Faculty, the following section is intended to clarify expectations surrounding the human proctoring of exams.

Middlebury College's Testing Center provides space for students who need extended time and reduced distraction testing environments. However, the Testing Center does not provide proctoring or distribution of exams.

- Proctor Behavior
    - Proctor movement: The goal is to create conditions in which all students can do their best, not to establish an atmosphere of intimidation, threat or distraction. It is standard practice for a proctor to periodically walk around during testing. However, the proctor should be sure to move in the space in a manner that is quiet and non-disruptive.
    - Proctor distraction: The goal is to create an assessment environment in which distractions are minimized in an effort to promote student success. Proctors should consider how their use of a cell phone or laptop might impact student performance on an assessment and distract them from the responsibility of proctoring.
- Student Proctors
    - In any given course, there may be many students who have accommodations that require extra time or an exam space with reduced distraction. These accommodations can be very challenging for a single professor to organize in such a way that they can proctor every student's completion of an exam. There are currently no College-wide resources for hiring student proctors. If a Program or Department chooses to hire student proctors then the faculty member should provide proctors with clear instructions both orally and in writing before the start

of the exam, and the faculty member should be nearby and on call for the duration of the exam so that they can be called in to respond immediately to any significant concern.

Limits of Proctoring

Video and Digital Student Surveillance

Currently, there is no policy that explicitly forbids a professor from proctoring an exam using live video Zoom feed. However, given that our goal is to create proctoring conditions that maximize the potential for student success, faculty are urged to consider the potential negative impact of video monitoring of students.

Middlebury has not purchased or supported the use of student surveillance services, such as online proctoring, plagiarism detection, AI detection, or other services that purport to monitor student behavior for signs of academic dishonesty. Surveillance software tends to cause the most harm to our most vulnerable students. Cameras and facial recognition struggle with non-white, non-male faces. The Center for Democracy and Technology reports on how test proctoring software discriminates against disabled students. Students facing digital surveillance platforms as part of their assessments may experience or re-experience trauma and long-term harm to their mental and emotional wellbeing. These tools create anxiety, technical complications, and work poorly for the students who are the most at risk.

Significant concerns about Middlebury student privacy and Intellectual Property exist when dealing with any student surveillance company. Student surveillance services collect a vast amount of personal data about students, using intrusive methods of data collection, in order to "predict" or "identify" signs of cheating. Students not only face extractive and intrusive data collection by those companies, they also face the exposure of their data via data breaches, due to the reported poor data security measures of those technology companies. In the case of plagiarism detection, students are forced to upload their intellectual property to a for-profit company which then retains rights to use that student's IP for the company's purposes and financial gain.